

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Appointment of Senior Advisor at the National Art Gallery, Singapore**

SINGAPORE, 20 September 2011 – To strengthen the National Art Gallery, Singapore's foothold in the international art, scholarship and museum development arenas, Mr Kwok Kian Chow, existing Director of the Gallery, will be appointed Senior Advisor. This appointment will take place with effect from 1 October 2011. As Senior Advisor, Mr Kwok will report to the Board and to the CEO, Mr Michael Koh. He will fly the flag for Singapore in international visual art and museum circles, leveraging on his knowledge of art history, museum studies and curatorship and his extensive network of international board and committee memberships and professional contacts.

As the Gallery gears towards its opening in 2015, work on various fronts has been rapidly growing. Occupying some 60,000 square metres, the strategic goal of the Gallery remains focused on being a regional visual arts hub with its scholarship centred on Southeast Asian and Singapore art in world context. The Gallery has also defined its strategic priorities for the years ahead, focusing on three key areas: building a leading museum destination that attracts up to five million annual visitors, developing a museum of good international standing which engenders a greater sense of cultural pride and national identity, and raising up to one-third of its operating budget through fund raising activities.

To gain a greater presence in the global cultural sector, the Gallery needs to cultivate a strong presence in both international and regional art, research and museum communities. Important loans and donations from museums and partners around the world are also needed to augment the Gallery's permanent and temporary exhibitions. This requires the

Gallery to strengthen its presence and influence amongst museums, collectors, cultural institutions, artists, academics and other bodies around the world.

In his new role in the organisation, Mr Kwok will focus on these critical growth areas. Mr Kwok who is a frequent contributor in international art forums and conferences will assist to engage international thought-leaders in the field and to secure donations and loans of important artworks from collectors and museums in the region, collaborate with international museums on travelling exhibitions, and represent the Gallery at the international level. At the strategic level, Mr Kwok will also provide advice to the Board and CEO of TNAGS on key museological and curatorial aspects of the Gallery's work.

Mr Kwok will continue to be a Board Member of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM) and other international roles including the Advisory Board of Kolkata Museum of Modern Art, India and Academic Committee of Collectors of Chinese Contemporary Art, China in his new capacity. He will also be the Gallery's representative in local visual arts platforms such as the UOB Group Art Committee and the Art Review Panel of the Land Transport Authority.

Since his appointment as the Gallery's Director in April 2009, Mr Kwok has contributed significantly to the Gallery, particularly in establishing its overarching museological positioning and overall curatorial frameworks for the permanent collection galleries. Under Mr Kwok's leadership, the Gallery has also organised a series of research exhibitions at the Singapore Art Museum, expanded its influence in international arenas, and co-organised two major conferences with the Institute of Policy Studies for public and international scholars' inputs on the development of the Gallery.

Mr Kwok Kian Chow says, "I'm excited about this new opportunity, and thank the National Art Gallery, Singapore for entrusting me with this new mission. As the Senior Advisor, my role allows me to focus on strengthening the museological and curatorial foundation and the international presence of the National Art Gallery and to help cultivate a deeper global interest in Southeast Asian and Singapore art and their global significance. We live in an unprecedented historic moment of multi-layered global cultural dialogues cutting across

cultures and times. New museum models sensitive to intercultural enrichment and community engagement are emerging and it is my wish that Southeast Asia can contribute significantly to shape the new museum paradigm. I hope my new role will also allow me to finally pick up all the titles on my bookshelf which have been waving to me all this while.”

A fresh search will be launched for a new Director to lead the Gallery in its museological and professional aspects. The Director will lead the Curatorial, Collections Management, Programming, Education and Publications functions, working closely with the other Directors within the Gallery. With its strategic directions clearly defined, the role of the new Director would lie in developing visitor-centric exhibitions and programmes, strengthening its research focus and building its collection. An international headhunting exercise will be carried out to search for the appropriate candidate to spearhead this senior role.

During this period, the Gallery will appoint Mr Low Sze Wee as the covering Director (Curatorial and Collections) to oversee the curatorial, collections management and exhibition functions. Mr Low is the former Deputy Director of Curation and Collections at the Singapore Art Museum and is now seconded to the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts. He has curated numerous exhibitions on Singapore and Southeast Asian art over the last decade. He will work directly with Mr Michael Koh, CEO of the Gallery, on the exhibitions and collections strategy during the interim period prior to the appointment of the new Director.

Since its incorporation in January 2009, work on various fronts for the Gallery has progressed according to project timelines, with the commencement of construction in January this year. As a people’s museum and a visitor-centred destination, the Gallery has continued to engage the general public and the arts community in Singapore. Consultations with artists, curators, art societies, potential visitors, and industry stakeholders have been organised through focus groups, symposiums and forums to collect feedback from the community at large. To cope with the growing demands of the project, the Gallery has also been actively growing its talent pool in both the professional and corporate areas.

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## **Notes to Editor**

### **About the National Art Gallery, Singapore**

The National Art Gallery, Singapore (*working title*) is a new visual arts institution which will contribute towards positioning Singapore as a regional and international hub for visual arts. It manages the world's largest public collection of modern Southeast Asian and Singapore art. The Gallery focuses on displaying, promoting and researching these artworks, relating them to the wider Asian and international contexts, and hosting international art exhibitions.

Situated in the heart of the Civic District, the City Hall and adjacent former Supreme Court building - two important heritage buildings symbolic of Singapore's nationhood - will be converted to house this exciting new visual arts venue. Slated to officially open in 2015, The Gallery will be a leading civic and cultural destination established for the enrichment, enjoyment and engagement of Singapore residents and visitors from all over the world. Information on the National Art Gallery is available at [www.nationalartgallery.sg](http://www.nationalartgallery.sg).